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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [KU](#) [ISLAMISTS](#)
SUBJECT: ISLAMIST MPS' GRILLING REQUESTS REKINDLE
UNCONSTITUTIONAL DISSOLUTION RUMORS

REF: A. 06 KUWAIT 4682
[1](#)B. 06 KUWAIT 4430

Classified By: CDA Matthew H. Tueller for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary and comment: While many opposition MPs appeared willing to give the new government a chance to show it can perform, two tribal Islamist MPs have kept the political heat on, calling for parliamentary grillings of the Finance and Islamic Affairs Ministers. Most politicians and editorialists oppose the grillings as unnecessarily antagonistic and other Islamist MPs have stepped in to mediate what would be yet another confrontation between the Government and parliament. Rumblings of an Amiri order dissolving Parliament have resurfaced quickly. The Government designed the current cabinet to stand up to destabilizing efforts but those left out of the backroom political deals may use the power afforded them in Kuwait's democracy to force a showdown. End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)2. (C/NF) Despite widespread calls for an end to the cycle of unproductive parliamentary attacks on cabinet ministers, the issue of "grilling" ministers has quickly resurfaced for the new Government. Tribal Islamist MP Daifallah Bou Ramya has stepped up his threats to grill Finance Minister Badr Al-Humaidhi and MP Abdullah Akkash has continued a lower-key push to grill Islamic Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Maatouq (Comment: Both MPs had threatened to grill these ministers prior to their reappointment. End comment.) Speculation about an unconstitutional dissolution of Parliament, which filled diwaniyyas and editorial pages late last year (ref B), has begun to reappear. Some have responded to this speculation, and its implicit threat from the Government, in unusually harsh terms. Veteran MP Ahmed Al-Saadoun was quoted in newspapers as saying "playing with the constitution will be the end of their (the ruling family's) regime."

[1](#)3. (C/NF) Bou Ramya has accused the Finance Minister of improprieties in the Public Investment Authority and of insufficient oversight over lending institutions. However, many believe Bou Ramya is motivated in large part by Humaidhi's role in scuttling legislation to write off Kuwaitis' personal loans in December (ref A), an issue of great interest to Bou Ramya's tribal constituents.

[1](#)4. (C/NF) Editorialists and most politicians have criticized Bou Ramya's grilling threats as a continuation of last year's cycle of unproductive personal political attacks between parliament and the Government. Parliament's Popular Action Bloc is withholding judgment, but the liberal National Action Bloc has already come out unequivocally against the grilling. The Islamic Bloc is divided. The Islamic Constitutional Movement (the political wing of Kuwait's Muslim Brotherhood) has publicly opposed the grilling, with ICM MP Khudheir Al-Enezi telling the press that the grilling

was hasty and that "Kuwaitis are sick of escalations." Wael Al-Hasawi, the former editor of the Salafi weekly newspaper, wrote in Al-Watan on April 10 that "everyone knows Bou Ramya's threats come from sour grapes (over the loans issue)," and that the people have had enough of "pettiness" between the parliament and Government. Al-Hasawi added that Bou Ramya's actions would tarnish the Islamic bloc as a whole.

15. (C/NF) MP Abdullah Akkash's campaign to grill Islamic Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Maatouq is based ostensibly on allegations of financial improprieties in the ministry. While there may be some basis to the allegations, the real reason probably lies in the fact that many conservative Islamists are uncomfortable with Al-Maatouq's unorthodoxies (he is rumored to have Sufi proclivities) and may be upset that he has focused on issues which some Islamists oppose, such as the Moderation Center, and has neglected other projects that they support. Al-Ma'atouq's involvement in banning books by Salafi ideologues such as Bin Baz in an Islamic book festival in 2006 is an example of where he gets on the wrong side of hard line Islamists. Islamists waged a public campaign to discredit Al-Maatouq during the period around the cabinet dissolution and some likely see his reappointment as a Governmental rebuke.

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